NBC NEWS - STS-2 LANDING (11-14-1981)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsDTJhOXqSs (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsDTJhOXqSs)

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From Saturday, November 14th, 1981 NBC News live coverage of the landing of STS-2, the 2nd Space Shuttle mission which landed at Edwards Air-Force Base in California.
Landing at 4:23:11 P.M EST/ 1:23:11 p.m. PST
STS-2 CREW:
Commander: Joe Engle
Pilot: Dick Truly

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we're back once again we want to tell you that uh right now the astronauts angle and truly are flying the orbiter at about 16 800 miles an hour they're putting it through a variety of tests in which they have their hands on the controls to see how stable this aircraft is at high speed here's our clock now on the countdown let us show it to you and there is the columbia orbiter approaching the west coast of the united states due to touchdown here at the rogers dry lake bed edwards air force base in just over 19 minutes 19 minutes from now 122 pacific standard time we expect to have that orbiter roll to a stop on runway 2-3 they've changed that john and just to bring you up to date they're in the period of what they call critical heating uh the spacecraft is coming down this way in that performance and this is where the tiles count because it's the the the there there are flames but because of the speed of the aircraft and the friction with the atmosphere it's coming down in this attitude and there's a glow all the way around it this period of critical heating will last until about six minutes after the hour and three minutes after that we'll be able to hear from the astronauts so that is what's going on up there right now and boyd matson has a report for us from on what's going on down here on the ground at in the public viewing area at edwards air force base they were expecting some 400 000 people at the public viewing sites to watch the second landing of the orbiter columbia but from the looks of the crowd at this moment they're not going to have that many last spring when we were here you could see the traffic lined up for miles people still coming in even as the columbia was touching down it doesn't look like that situation will reoccur but there are a lot of folk here at this moment and some of them have been here all night sleeping out on the ground one person even brought a mattress to make the ground more comfortable they were entertaining themselves

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they were entertaining themselves playing guitars listening to radios cooking out all night long and while many are still in their campus at this moment a few are out by their sleeping bags or by tents and one person who is out is glenn rambach who liked the space shuttle landing so much the first time has come back for a second viewing what was the appeal that has attracted you well it was a lot of appeal but uh i guess the thing that would kind of uh bring it into focus is the fact that uh there was a series of events during the landing uh with a large crowd here and everyone tuned to the same radio news station um there there was a series of events the first event was uh when the they had the burn for deorbit and they come out of orbit and that was successful and everyone was excited because that was the first time that ever happened and then the first time that it came through the blackout period and there was a long question mark and when we heard the broadcast that we made it through everyone cheered and then there was about a seven minute seven seven minutes later there was a sonic boom went by and everybody went wild a couple minutes later everyone started to see it i i have eye contact with it and everyone got very electrified and excited and then the last thing was when it finally touched down all these radios that were tuned to the same station started playing a national anthem and it was a very electrifying experience everyone enjoyed it it's having been here it seemed like a very patriotic moment when everybody got in the spirit of of america yeah it was absolutely and it's it's it's something to be proud of i think it's a very technological great technological feat well it must have been exciting if it brought you back here to camp out sleep out all night with your son out here and brave this wind and cold weather small potatoes it was worth it that's the way things are going at the moment on the north side of the lake bed and now we'll go back to the anchor desk thank you very much boyd matson we're listening now 16 minutes away from touchdown here at rogers dry lake bed at edwards air force base is expected to cross the coastline of california in the big sur area right about san simeon

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simeon at an altitude of 130 000 feet and a distance at that point to edwards of 198 nautical miles velocity about 6 400 feet per second ground track then takes it uh just a few miles south of the pasa robles 176 nautical miles from edwards velocity at that point 5900 feet per second at altitude 124 000. all right all right we've been listening to a spokesman for nasa we're going to go to a commercial now because we want to come back and pick up the communication from the orbiter as it comes out of the blackout period we'll be back after this [Music] [Laughter] [Music] all right we're waiting now for communications to be resumed between the shuttle columbia and mission control in houston at this hour at about this hour it is approaching the coast of california near san simeon in the big sur area uh at about a hundred and forty thousand feet seventy three thousand feet a range of five hundred and forty two miles yeah about 45 seconds to voice into yeah until we we'll we'll just sort of dropping like a rock at this point here they come hold on now going at about seven times the speed of sound chase mrs houston stand by for a mark at 12. stand by mark that's uh capcom to the chase aircraft giving him a mach 12. energy is nominal the auxiliary power units of which we've

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units of which we've heard so much are working fine irrigational systems look good we're about 25 miles south of the nominal ground track no problem from you houston through buckhorn configure aos you're about 25 miles south of ground track your nav is good your energy is good we'd like you to check your attack and mls and radar altimeters on over okay there they are okay rick good to hear you and we're showing 10.5 mark in 165 000 feet now okay we concur with that joe and did you get my call on the navi okay we got the car on the navi the next nine minutes are gonna go like the wind here roger everything's looking good your energy is very good the nav is good out of 154 000. okay while they discuss this we'll be back after this message [Music] [Laughter] [Music] now you can shop with money in your checking account and never write the check mastercard too it looks almost like the mastercard card it's accepted like the credit card around the world and goes through the imprinter the same way but what you spend is paid from your personal checking account no bills no interest that's it it looks like a credit card but mastercard 2 works like a check carry both you want the two too why is our citation x11 such a hero with performance minded americans let's ask single person citation x11 supercar the handling is impressive california they have just crossed the coast of california at about a roughly 140 000 feet going seven times the speed of sound having survived

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times the speed of sound having survived the fiery descent through into the atmosphere uh and they are on schedule to be landing here well let's have a look at our clock that'll tell us more accurately than anything else we have um in something like about six minutes nine minutes sorry nine minutes it is more accurate than i am and uh now let's listen in now because there'll be a lot of talk they're dropping so fast 115 000 feet mach 5.3 range 148 miles speed brakes are 100 at this point this wind is going to tend to blow joe east away from the runway as he makes his turn and he's going to have to steepen up the turn 110 okay roger okay they'll be left roll reversal now at 108th time they're just south of bakersfield 125 miles on 4.5 four and a half times the speed of sound and you'll hear those mach numbers drop you'll also be hearing a sonic boom maybe two is there mark roger hey i know it's ptl3 right sorry about that roger that was a big one and it was completed by 405 okay we can turn [Applause] speed break coming in an hour ago they were going 17 000 miles an hour range 96 edwards has aqueous visual

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range 96 edwards has aqueous visual accusation on tv out of a hundred thousand feet mark 3.6 you have positive statements that's the little uh carbon there if you could say again the books are coming out now at three point four and taking your last positive seats means they can eject now it's in there somewhere ladies and gentlemen that's the air force's long-range monochrome camera in just a minute or two we'll get more pictures 90 000 feet and a range of 74 miles there you are a little your screen now that's one of the chase planes some of these planes themselves send back pictures of the spacecraft which is now an aircraft roger we're looking at it now about six minutes away from land columbia houston you can take the air [Applause] data 82 000 feet mach 2.5 range 57 you know they're 57 mile nautical miles out now dropping fast they're in the area that they called the terminal area energy management area and houston uh roger and in the next five minutes they will drop from 82 000 feet down to everything's looking right on the money there joe and we have a wind update for you in a weather update uh you've got a very thin layer at 25 000. the winds airborne are as brief and on the ground 2 2 0 18 knots gusting to two four altimeters three zero decimal zero seven you got 60 miles of his

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zero seven you got 60 miles of his underneath over hey good sounds like a good old 80 days yes sir out of 68 000 39 miles range mach 1.5 okay pti six mark they're still trying to slow it down going faster than the speed of sound still think about this continuing to fly they drop 9 000 feet in the last 40 seconds of flight that's a dive right out there if we could only see him 60 thousand plummy houston that's your convenience transfer the state vector from the past some of the crowds okay thank you very much i can see him john yeah so can i straight directly in this guy above edwards why is that something range 27 mile so it's now the speed of sound 27 miles to go before touchdown you should hear the song boom in a minute roger you're tracking right down the line it will make a giant sweeping turn and then come in on runway 23. there it is double sonic boom bang bang in a chair 42 000 that's one of the few times that sound is comforting it's one of the few times it's legal in the united states the fact is that they don't call this an airplane i mean he's telling them are you intercepting the heck and a reminder you've got the strong winds out of the west now out of here out of 38 000 feet they call it an aerospace aerodynamic

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they call it an aerospace aerodynamic vehicle and it's exempt from sonic boom regulations but not too much roger a little momentary instability but uh it's same as they got on the first place joe's got his hands on the controls sounds like yeah yeah with this wind he can make the turn more gently than the computer can so he's in control a little chase plane right behind it t-380 knots at 18 000. gibson it comes in at 201 knots at about the speed of well dc-9 lands at 185 miles an hour so that it's about that roger's still just slightly low on the energy looking okay joe engel has made hundreds perhaps thousands of landings here at edwards air force base so this will be familiar territories he looks down this may be his best one nine miles range in the 13 000. roger's slightly below glide slope you're below the glad slope you have a gopher auto lamp okay rick thank you sir okay rick we're on engine below glide slope as close in and as high as he is

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as high as he is yeah it's a very steep glide slope nine thousand two thirty check speed break auto okay there's the big player thank you i think the computer's flying it now next thing we'll hear is the gear lowering they're going to have to do that which is a critical point in this flight plan we'll hear pre-flare and he'll take it back from the computer about that time i believe and by pre-flare boy it's coming right at us when it begins to break that high sink rate but 2500 feet above the ground joe will take it back no computer is going to steal this landing from him you know it's amazing when you see it on television you don't have the perception that you do watching it visually it's just dropping dropping out of the sky yeah really is remarkable well it drops about 13 000 feet per minute yeah all under control 40 000 feet it nine thousand feet in the last starts the hospital and starting the nose up chase can curse clearly all the hydraulics are working well joe kirwan he's cleared to land three down oh lovely oh boy 100 50 30 20 10 5 3. 15. and columbia proves the basic premise that you can send these things up

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that you can send these things up more than once it's never been done before have you just seen it done before your very eyes the world's first reusable spaceship it's a very nice ending to what has to be a disappointing flight for these two gentlemen angle and truly they had to cut it short they got a lot of their missions done but they came back in very good form and the important thing is to them and to nasa and of course to the american people i don't think it's a disappointing flight at all right when bob parker said that in houston i wanted to box his ears all the important uh objectives have been achieved but if you wanted to be up there for five days joe kerwin you've been waiting for 15 years for two and a half i'll bet their feelings at this point are not those of disappointments i'll take your word for it you know better than that now the next thing we will see of course is the who have to go out and look at the propellants and make sure that nobody gets poisoned by anything the sniff people the sniff people and and they are the people who will have to power down the orbiter and make sure that the crew comes out we will also have houston physical examinations of the astronauts two uh doctors will go into the aircraft when it is deemed safe for entry and uh and have a quick look at them so that they do have work of the day is not over for these two astronauts joe henry engel and dick truly they are they still have a lot to do and they'll end up tonight at home in houston a couple of really nice guys with a couple of terrific wives it goes without saying i guess but cody and mary must be feeling well too at this time that's cody truly and mary engel been married to these pilots for all of their professional lives

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all of their professional lives hmm great landing i'd like to just get permanently assigned to this duty if i may i'll just watch the take off and then come over here to california watch him land it never fails to throw me well i've only seen it twice but it's throwing me both times it's gonna be at increasingly short intervals that's all right florida in california that's pretty good duty joe we can just move back and forth once every couple of weeks eventually well the uh we could hear the cheers from people all around us i don't know if you picked that up on your sets at home but there was a there were great cheers that came up here from their people who are just like in the sports scenes folks we're going to go back for a little instant replay now of that uh very smooth landing by your pilot joe engel he's the commander of the spacecraft he had his hands on the controls and the pilot so designated is richard truly who sits in the seat beside him here it comes now the columbia orbiter this is the first time that a spaceship has gone into space for a second time they weren't able to perform their crosswind test because the winds were just too strong they didn't want to risk that so they landed on runway 2-3 with a win right behind him a little boost as they came back having performed that well uh in a strong headwind they may increase that crosswind envelope next time yeah actually they were landing right into the window it was not a little gusty out there strong as it was and shows you how i do as a pilot there's the landing gosh that's nice it is quite remarkable when you think about it whether they're up there for five days or two and a half days in this case it was 54 hours but to

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case it was 54 hours but to make that many orbits of the earth and then to come down as they did right on schedule where they wanted them to once they recalibrated all their computers and all of their schedules you know something i've noticed i think during this entire flight i haven't heard the word tiles mentioned no you haven't that seems to be uh as a matter of fact they had an aircraft up there this morning looking right this afternoon looking to see if there were any missing tiles and we didn't we haven't heard any reports about that but the thermal protection system as it is known seems to be working well we'll have more coverage of the landing of the spaceship columbia after this coming up next on sports world a scheduled 10-round middleweight bout between alex ramos and norvetto sabateer live from atlantic city new jersey right after our coverage of the landing of columbia 2. uh and the ship is down safely now the uh uh ground preparations are are ready to uh uh stow some of the gear aboard it to purge it of certain propellants that our contaminate could contaminate people to plug it in as it were to tie up it's umbilical all of that is going on now the access vehicles are starting to move out as you can see you can see it better on television than we can from here including the doctors who will be uh going there to examine the uh astronauts let's listen to some of the chatter that we hear on between the ship and the ground between the ground and the ground units will be hooked up to uh

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check flight controller power on the right side over roger uh it is off did uh i thought i saw the services when i did the test hour would you like to repeat it uh with the flight control power on real quick that's affirmative they're due to come out of there at um about 20 minutes from now they have a that's when the scheduled crew egresses that means they're going to get the leave the columbia orbiter they leave the cockpit and then they go down into them sounds okay doesn't it joe everything oh it sounds wonderful it's uh just the routine switchology now yeah going to the uh they're shutting it off that's right you'll recall that john young was a little impatient in there the last time and i just we need ammonia a to secondary on over okay i think the crew may not stay in quite so long this time it looks like they've got a shorter schedule inside once it's down on the ground yes i think they'll leave the orbiter with the little nostalgia however right i'm sure a little regret all right we have heidi shulman standing by in a very important persons area here they've got some celebrity viewers as you might expect some well-connected people who came out for all of us and heidi shulman is with some of them heidi tom it was a beautiful sight out here as the columbia came in not just overhead which you saw of course but among the people here the big cheer of course going up as we first spotted it several minutes out people stood and wiped tears from their eyes as it came in it glided in for a landing they played the national anthem people stood silently and very proudly one man with his hat over his chest among the onlookers out here again today rusty schweikert the former astronaut

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rusty schweikert the former astronaut from apollo 9. this was your second viewing of course you were out here before had it looked today to you oh it looked better today than last time we could pick it up a lot earlier because of the lighting and i was able to follow it in my binoculars all the way down it was really much more impressive than last time i thought you were mentioning some of the maneuvering that you saw them doing from a pilot standpoint what could you make out well i was i was quite surprised of course i knew they would be doing quite a bit of maneuvering but uh i was surprised at how visible it was in the binoculars you could see the craft roll back and forth several times and also the pitch maneuvers that joe put in toward the end were quite visible and to anyone who had binoculars so the the the uh it emphasizes the fact that we're really dealing with a flying machine as well as a spacecraft which of course is part of the the clue to this thing that suggests to you that they have learned some of the things they wanted to and the landing maneuvers on this on this landing even though they had some problems with a win i would hope so uh certainly uh joe seemed to have enough time to get everything done at least from what i could see out here uh i would imagine that the aerodynamicists are really happy with the with the data that they'll get from this one what about the crowd reaction around you from where you stood oh it was the uh i'd hate to say typical because it's always so exciting but i had some friends with me from sacramento who had never seen one before and and they're just very very excited it's it's really quite an emotional experience it is terrifically emotional you you obviously are a great uh fan and follower of this are you gonna come out here for all the landings well i think i'll uh likely will be here for the landings that happen in california but when they start landing in florida i'm going to have a hard time buying a ticket over there so there of course has been some disappointment about the late launch having to cut the mission short as an astronaut someone who cares very much about this program what's your feeling about the overall mission that you've just seen come to an end here well i'll tell you heidi it's very important in these test flights one really has to understand the

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one really has to understand the difference between a test flight and an operational flight and the purpose of these test flights is to really check out the vehicle make sure everything's working to to act conservatively and that's the way the flight was handled from the beginning when george page stopped the launch even right at the last minute to make sure everything was just right and the same way with dealing with these fuel cells you don't take a chance you act conservatively when you prove the vehicle then you go off operationally with a lot of confidence okay rusty schweikert thank you very much we'll see you at the next landing okay and we are going back down to john chancellor on the lake bed and they've uh here we are on the lake bed and out there they are on the lake bed and the sniffing has begun we've just checked the wind we have a little wind meter here and up here where we are it's uh at least 10 miles an hour out there it's probably far more so that any um bad things that are vented from the aircraft will be blown away in this wind and i think that probably won't take as long as they usually do john chancellor can now be revealed has a toy for almost everything including one that tells him that the wind is blowing the rest of us hadn't noticed that the wind was born well i can prove that the wind has blown that's the thing we've got our sources and we're willing to identify them there you're looking at some of the uh monitoring that is going on around the columbia orbiter joe kirwan let me ask you a question these two men waited for a total of 31 years to get up into space now they're going to have to go back to the end of the line more or less again and it may be a long time before they get to fly again why do we have to keep changing crews if we can send the same spacecraft back up why can't we send the same crews every two or three flights well we could but if you uh if you do that kind of thing too often you you suddenly wind up with a number of people near the end of their careers and no new people coming along i think what we'll begin to see down the line is one of the old guys flying with one new guy up up in the front and pretty much the same in the back of the ship when we start flying the mission specialists

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mission specialists so that you will be re-flying your experienced crew members and also bringing the new people along and keeping up the team and if you're going to go i can't remember how many times a year but let's say that you were going to go uh with say four week turnarounds you'd be going 12 times a year that eats up a lot of people doesn't it 12 times when you get up to 20 and 24 times we'll need a lot of people and we'll need to bring some of these these young 30 and 35 year old whippersnappers along right and well we have to go through this procedure on all the landings back at when they begin to land them back at the kennedy space center in florida do you think that they'll have to go through the sniff procedure to check for gases each time i think so they uh they may modify it uh according to experience but uh shoot there's there's no hurry we can take an hour getting uh getting that thing hooked up to the uh to the tow truck i don't think after a flight this long you know 15 or 20 minutes no i'm just curious all right we'll be seeing the astronauts later in this half hour and we'll be back with more coverage of the landing of columbia after this so here's where we stand now astronauts uh joe colonel ingle joe engel and richard truly uh having had their trip in space cut short by some faulty equipment aboard the spacecraft nevertheless made a very successful and quite dramatic and thrilling landing here today they are still in the shuttle columbia they'll be coming out in a few minutes we will have a look at them and perhaps hear a word or two from them that's where we stand now tom well the columbia orbiter is now going to be uh out there for a while and then it's going to be towed back into a position here and it'll be it'll be prepared for its cross-country flight to the kennedy space center once again the last time it took about 12 days to

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the last time it took about 12 days to prepare for that trip back to cape canaveral this time it should take less once it is ready the orbiter will be lifted onto a 747 shuttle aircraft and the trip back will be much the same as last time the trip to the kennedy space center will take two days they'll fly only in daylight stopping for refueling at the kennedy space center the orbiter will be thoroughly checked out broken or lost tiles will be replaced the payload will be removed new loads installed for the next trip a new external tank will be at the center ready to be joined to the orbiter the solid rocket boosters ejected on this flight will not be used for the next trip they will be recovered from the ocean and cleaned up and reloaded for later flights according to space administration analysis this rocket retrieval and reuse saves 35 million dollars a launch the orbiter will be moved to the vehicle assembly building and there it will be lifted and rotated to a standing position it then will be ready for mating with the external tank and the solid rocket boosters on the mobile launching platform this mobile platform is larger than a baseball diamond the entire unit will be moved to launching pad 39a where nasa will then complete its test the tank and rockets will get fueled up the orbiter will be ready for its third orbital flight we're back and we expect that third orbital flight to take place by the way sometime in early march 1982. i've got it right i got it got all the years right and with us now is fitchu fulton who is the commander of the big 747 that has a special attachment to the top of it in which on which the columbia orbiter will be placed here at edwards air force base and then flown across the country and we always have to remind everybody it takes you two days to get here doesn't it fitz well that's correct uh

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doesn't it fitz well that's correct uh we'll we could make it one day by starting early in the day but uh we don't have enough range in the 747 to go all the way so we have to make two legs how long will they be landing back here at edwards and being transported across the country in your 747 and how i guess how soon will they be able to return to kennedy space center and just do it all there uh well of course after they land here we plan to leave nine days later but uh i guess i'm not quite sure the way you were asking well no i mean how long will it be before they stop the landings here and just go right on back to kennedy and do it all right out of there i believe is it the fifth or sixth landing yeah they're shooting for about the fifth landing kits yeah that's 1983 i think well 82. no or it'll it'll be 82. yeah so the frequency of flights uh you know the time between flights should decrease as uh as we do more flights we're going to show everyone your seven there's the columbia orbiter of course now we're going to show them the 747. how does the 747 perform with another airplane on top of it well it performs quite well i think the the whole key to it is that the 747 is an exceptionally good flying airplane to start off with and then when you put the shuttle on top it certainly doesn't fly quite as well but it still flies better than some of the transports that are around you have in the the device that is used to put the plane on top of the orbiter is called a mater d mater yeah a mate mating and d mating device what happens like a big forklift fits well it really is uh not quite that way it's a steel framework where they uh lift the shuttle up and then tow the 74700 and then lower the shuttle on top and then both the two together now if the shuttle had had to land let's say at white sands in new mexico or it wrote it in spain because of weather problems could you get that mater d mater to uh to either of those other fields well they have a portable loading device uh stiff leg derrick i believe they call it which is transported within a couple of weeks can be set up to load the shuttle it's not quite as good as the one here and the one the cape but

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as the one here and the one the cape but it certainly does the job but we used it at huntsville and you of course are prepared to fly anywhere in the world to pick it up we could probably go to rota for short notice let me ask you a cap question fitz uh you have flown a lot in your lifetime you've had a long historic and colorful career you've now flown the orbiter back and forth across the country a couple of times does that mean you get to go to nasa and say hey folks how about just one free ride for all of us that i put in on behalf of your program are you being in the shuttle yes well uh we could probably ask but i suspect it's not forthcoming you regret that a little bit here you've you've had such a colorful and really meaningful career as a pilot and aviation in this country well i think any test pilot or any pilot who enjoys looking at new things but enjoy a flight in the shuttle and i'm i'm in that same group but uh i'm probably came along a little early for that and i certainly had a lot of enjoyable things happen to me even outside the show fitz we'd like to show you so you can see on our television screens here the landing that we saw we saw just a few moments ago we watched it with the naked eye but here are the television pictures of it coming in with the little chase plane looking like a fish nearby why don't you tell us about what is going on with joe engel at the controls here and how it looked to you as you watched it well he's coming down at something like 285 290 knots the chase airplane is flying alongside to act as a safety chase and actually engel can do everything without the safe without the chase airplane but the chase is just another set of eyes to to look at the landing gear when it goes down and to give him a check on the air speed to make sure that his system is working the way we expect it to and then as he flares and gets close to the ground he can look out the window until he's out too but he has the instrumentation on board that tells him how high he is but the chaser airplane is just one more additional precaution and one more extra set of eyes to say how many feet above the ground in case some of the instrumentation doesn't work but joe has done this so many times in training that it's an old hat to him really now once he's on the ground of course he

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now once he's on the ground of course he holds the nose up and the chase airplane goes on its way and i'm sure he does some braking tests once he lowers the nose vince how much does that thing weigh now uh probably around 210 211 000 pounds uh as we fly back on the top of 747 this time i believe the predictive weight should be around 207 this is the heaviest it's been landed the landings where he dropped it off the 747 he landed around 150 000 pounds and i believe on the last landing it was uh well pretty close to 200 000 because each flight has gotten a little heavier so you got 210 000 pounds of vehicle yes no power well but he has a lot of energy and that's the whole key to the thing you have to keep your speed and your altitude well you come overhead you have altitude and that's it it converts to energy and the speed does too so he maneuvers around till he's ready to flare and he's got the proper speed than any flares the right place it all comes out well vets thank you very much for coming up and talking with us again it's always a pleasure thank you very much more coverage of columbia after this coming up next on sports world a scheduled 10-round middleweight bout between alex ramos and novito saboteer live from atlantic city new jersey right after our coverage of the landing nbc news continues its coverage of the landing of colombia sponsored in part by chevrolet who invites you to see all the good things for 1982 at your local chevy dealers chevy makes good things happen edwards air force base the rogers dry lake bed and out there parked behind us of course is the columbia orbiter home a little early about a two-day or a two-day mission altogether they had hoped to be up there until tuesday arriving back here then but they had to cut it short because some problems on board although 90 percent of the missions were accomplished that they set out to including a successful test of the big canada arm joe engel the commander of the columbia

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joe engel the commander of the columbia orbiter said the bird is real solid a good solid bird all the way he must have felt that as he landed in a stiff headwind here at edwards air force base today touchdown right on schedule and it'll look very good to those of us who are just amateurs we expect to see the crew momentarily they're shutting down the spacecraft right now they are also inspecting the exterior of it for any alien gases that it might have carried back from space i'll be houston we would like hydraulic circuit number three on now all three [Applause] joe kerwin sir what will be the maximum orbit someone was asking me here today that the columbia orbiter will be able to fly at some point they were at about 157 miles we now have ground cooling as high as six or seven hundred miles but the higher it goes the less payload it can carry by the time you get up to six or seven hundred miles you have to be going to retrieve a payload not bringing one up there with you so to keep it as a truck as a workhorse for the space program they want to load it up conduct experiments generally speaking we'll be carrying satellites and other payloads to orbits between 150 and 300 miles and then their own upper stages will carry them up from there but the future for that looks very bright right now today there you see on your screen the opening of the hatch which is uh means that we're about five minutes away from the if they're following their schedule of the astronauts coming out they will be given brief physical examinations in there now uh and i think really cursory dr kirwan wouldn't you say i mean what would they do blood pressure blood pressure pulse uh take a look at the eyes uh it's pretty much pro forma though yeah

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much pro forma though yeah yeah they sounded like they're in very good shape that's right and uh they and then they'll come out and start the rest of their long day which will bring them back to their families in houston uh sometime this evening john we have heidi shulman standing by the vip area here at edwards air force base with what i'm told are some big brass heidi [Music] tom we are standing by out here in the vip center with general richard henry the commander of the air force space division and general phil conley here at edwards air force base gentlemen your impressions of the beautiful landing today there was a one that made one sound stand proud for being an american that certainly seemed to be the reaction here in the crowd and from where you stood i sure agree with that uh also for me being here at edwards to see uh dick truly and joe engel come on back here it was really great they're good friends of ours and we're just happy happy for them here at edwards of course the air force is becoming more and more involved with the shuttle you'll be involved here today with testing it now when they bring it off the field won't some of the facilities here be used for that yes we'll be having at least two more flights coming on in here then it will go operational and land down at cape canaveral but every time it launches we'll go on alert for an emergency landing out here what are you looking towards for future involvement in the air force even more so than we're seeing right now well we're constructing vandenberg air force base for be able to launch the shuttle in 1985 and that time we'll put man over the north pole and uh we're preparing many of our spacecraft for deployment on the shuttle in the next four or five years there seemed to be a tremendous sense of patriotism from where we stood watching in this crowd is that the sense that you felt as well the same sense it was the same sense that i felt down at the cape when they launched a tremendous uh surge of pride in this country you've seen both now which is more exhilarating the landing the landing it really was beautiful today and we could see it for a long time too that's right you got to be proud to be an american today gentlemen thank you very much uh we are

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gentlemen thank you very much uh we are leaving here now and going back down to the lake bed to our anchor desk thank you heidi and it's interesting the the military role in this i think we ought to remind our audience is growing and next year i think the defense department is going to be spending more money on the shuttle than nasa is going to be spending on the shuttle and uh if the shuttle is in trouble politically let me say this as carefully as i can because there are as we know critics who say why spend the money 11 billion dollars so far what have you got uh the defenders of nasa now include the military people who say that they need the shuttle uh to service satellites to place other satellites in orbit to do a number of things so that this is one aspect of the of the space program in the united states that is becoming really quite heavily military well the fact is that the air force is constructing its own not too far from here vandenberg air force base they're at hard at work and they'll be launching out of there by what they say 1984 i think 85 now 85 now there's some tom there are military versions of almost every civilian aircraft that you or i've ever flown in there's nothing unusual about it and i think it's an economical and sensible thing to do one of the criticisms as you know joe is that the air force may be getting a little bit of a free ride here on a civilian space agency in the interim i think of one third of the payloads and the the initial series of flights are military oriented yeah but hey i'd i'd rather have the military hook hitching rides from a civilian vehicle than the civilians trying to hitch rides from a military vehicle i think we have our priorities right would you two like to look at some pictures with me we've got some pictures of john young's walk last april when this aircraft was up in space before april 12th to 14th i think was that flight that was when he came out of the of the shuttle a little bit early didn't he joe don't you remember that well he came out before dick did and examining the i know what he was

00:46:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsDTJhOXqSs&t=2760s)

and examining the i know what he was looking at he was looking at looking at the time how many tiles has they lost you know john young if you if you meet him as a very low key man of very few words and to see him like this is really out of character i mean where he is so exuberant and so excited and so enthusiastic about the fight so you know that that had to be a remarkable experience for him because if you see him otherwise he is a man he's kind of a gary cooper type a little shorter but he just yep and nope and kind of a quick smile and that's it now look at him chattering away laughing having a great time april of this year he's here today of course because he was flying the weather flights before they landed and that's becoming a very important function it seems to me joe of having the satellite the shuttle training aircraft up looking to see what the weather is like from a pilot's point of view and as we were saying the other day over at the cape the uh the launch in bad weather would depend on on the pilot who was flying the shuttle training aircraft that's right be the final go-no-go person yes being a man who has flown the orbiter to touchdown he can look at that runway and say in this weather i can see it satisfactorily or not uh i think we'll find uh probably joe or dick fly in the well i was just going to ca next time yeah as everybody keeps processing up this escalator you ready for those of you who are not familiar with the dimensions uh john young said an interesting thing last week at cape kennedy at cape canaveral the kennedy space center i'll get it right one of these years he said that that a lot of people have described it as a as about the size of a dc-9 but he said it has the body of a dc-10 inside i mean it's a big old wide aircraft is what it is so it's a good thing to sort out it seems to me we have been describing it for those of you who are familiar with commercial aircraft this is about the size of a dc-9 but inside we're going to listen now to as the

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we're going to listen now to as the shutdown procedure goes on and we want to await of course the arrival of angle and truly back on terror firmer and just as we say we're going to listen nothing big always the case it's a good sign they may have unhooked their right the tiles by the way the last time they did get a little heat through gaps in the tile so they were doing some additional testing weren't they this time there was some scarring on the aircraft itself the last time nothing serious but they wanted to run some tests this time to close those gaps and they'll be stitching them together even more in the future i'm told but they were using a new adhesive process this time for some of those tiles that and i think they're getting it straight myself we're learning we've only had two flights but uh this one i think was much more trouble free in that area than the first and third one will be even better we want to remind you as well that as soon as we see astronauts angle and truly emerging from the columbia orbiter after their flight and we see them back on earth take a good look at them we'll be going back to sports world on nbc which will make the sun god very happy yeah my guess is that they're having their temperatures taken and their blood pressures checked right now and that's why you don't hear a lot of talk the schedule calls for them to be have finished these uh housekeeping chores houston uh we would like hydraulic circumference one two three off over wrong again they're still doing we'll go there never predict what nasa will do no problem there richard uh the hydraulic temperatures are stabilized but when you think it's got 300 miles of electrical wires in it it's got three and a half miles of copper tubing it's got several thousand switches

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thousand switches it is is it fair to say i mean accurate as a better word this is the most complicated vehicle ever put together i think that's absolutely fair to say and i think that that being the case there's no way we're going to launch this very often without something going on the fritz yeah of course something really quite large went on the fritz this time to cut the mission more than in half hopefully most of the time there'll be minor things that that give us problems i don't want to put you on the spot joe but i'm going to anyway what was the talk down in houston about whether or not they could continue this on a day-to-day basis or cut it short and bring it back when they did do you know there'd been some reports that they brought it back early because washington nasa was concerned about the public relations problem if they had another serious mishap on this kind of troubled second attempt well sure but i think the primary focus of the discussion was if we come back on saturday what is the impact on the next flight and the flight after that and when the decision was made but provided we got a good entry successful tests we'll be able to go with the third flight substantially on time substantially with the same objectives and substantially at the same place in our test program then why risks staying up two or three days longer that's great houston uh kfc does not have telemetry's present time and houston will maintain control until they do get to land okay joe engel who is the commander of the columbia orbiter is so passionate about flying that in his spare time he flies vintage aircraft world war ii planes and older airplanes and he keeps one in his yard that they put together a little piper cub that he and his son fly they go out and put it together and go out and fly around in the texas aerospace and he's also a man given to wearing cowboy boots a lot so he is a real authentic kind of american 20th century

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american 20th century cowboy flies around in space but wears cowboy boots he brings together uh all the best traditions of this country i guess as you said he's a he's a gary gary cooper type but he's a real gary cooper he's not acting that's right this is the landing control room we're looking at here and i'm beginning to wonder why they're behind schedule as much as they are we uh by one calculation that i've been able to make we should have seen the astronauts about 10 or 15 minutes ago i don't know that there's that much to do that would delay it this long oh you know you hook up the cooling and then you look for the temperatures to stabilize yeah you turn this pump on and then you turn it off again and did you notice that uh after landing they started reading them up a bunch of changes to the post landing procedures yeah uh every engineer thinks of a last minute test he wants to do to verify this or that well being very patient they may have learned something from the landing last april when they when they turned it off so we're just waiting here as are the people in launch control to see the astronauts as they uh as they come out are you gentlemen ready to buy tickets yet absolutely for the shuttle yes as uh as passengers tom is more adventuresome than i i the uh i'd like to be i find anybody would like to be the first reporter to go on the show i mean i would certainly volunteer in a minute and so with time so would every good reporter i know uh and to that degree would we by thereby volunteering would we be saying that we think this is a safe vehicle probably we would be uh would i want my son to go on the shuttle right now on the right side check out get it a little more regular guys thank you very much but i'd go okay i'd go and i let my three daughters go too would you yeah i tell you what i like to do i'd like to be there just for the takeoff well i that just absolutely sends chills

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well i that just absolutely sends chills up my spine when that thing lifts off the pad and uh as i've said this before you're growing up in this society and you have any kind of a feeling for speed at all and for power and thrust that's uh that single moment uh kind of the consolidation of all of those annoying okay see that's interesting you can tell a lot about how about that angle and truly before they left that's uh dick truly in front joe engel coming down behind joe angle said i asked him what's what's the greatest hope and he said don't do nothing dumb they didn't do nothing dumb can't think of a thing being greeted by george abbey director of flight operations at the johnson space center well there they are we've had our share of adventures with these two astronauts uh joe henry engel 49 years old a colonel in the air force and richard truly a captain in the navy they are going to get some deserved rest now and on uh i can think back to the delay that we had a one week delay when uh at cape kennedy because there was a mechanical problem and then we had a letter perfect launch day before yesterday i guess it seems like a month ago and uh then they developed a power unit problem and they had to bring it back early and it had just an absolutely wonderful landing here today which is i guess gentlemen thrilling is one of the words that we have to uh really is a majestic moment and uh there will be continuing questions about nasa and about the space shuttle program but i do feel very good for the two astronauts engel and truly to have it go as well as it did because they've waited a long time for it it went very well and i'd like to say one other thing john i think that this has been a very fair test and this hairpiece i think if it stays on in this one i'm gonna keep it i don't care what they say on that note thank you and goodbye

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on that note thank you and goodbye okay this has been an nbc news special report

END